

## CLAIMS

1. An installation for monitoring containers (3 ; 107 ; 109 ; 111) each equipped with an information medium (7), comprising at least one delimited storage zone (103; 300 ; 302 ; 304 ; 306 ; 308) for the containers including at least one access passage (118 ; 320) for a user to the storage zone, provided with at least one device (142) for identifying the user and with at least one reading device (13 ; 55) able to read the information on the containers' information medium (7), and data exploitation means exploiting at least the information registered by the reading device (13).
2. The installation as claimed in claim 1, wherein the exploitation means comprise means (148) for evaluating the stock of containers warehoused in the storage zone.
3. The installation as claimed in claim 1 or 2, wherein the exploitation means comprise means for determining the positions of the containers in the storage zone (103 ; 300).
4. The installation as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 3, wherein the storage zone (103 ; ...303) comprises at least one facility (100) for distributing containers (107, 109, 111) comprising a storage space (103) for the containers and means of authorization (140) of removal of at least one container disposed in the said storage space (103), said means of authorization (140) comprising, on the one hand, disabling means (144), switchable between a position for disabling the containers disposed in the storage space (103) and a distribution position in which at least one container is authorized to be removed, and, on the other hand, means (146) of control of the said disabling means (144).
5. The installation as claimed in one of claims 1 to 4, wherein the information exploitation means furthermore comprise means (162) for memorizing at least one minimum threshold of full containers, means

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(170) for comparing the stock with the minimum  
threshold of full containers, means for triggering a

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replenishment order, controlled by the means (170) for comparing the stock with the minimum threshold, and means (127) for transmitting the replenishment order to a replenishment center (129).

5 6. The installation as claimed in claim 5, wherein the means (162) for memorizing at least one minimum threshold comprise at least one memory location (164A, 166A) per type of container for memorizing at least one minimum threshold per type of cylinder.

7. The installation as claimed in claim 6, wherein the memory locations (164A, 164B; 166A, 166B) per type of container comprise, on the one hand, a memory location (164A; 166A) for a safety threshold serving for the triggering of a normal replenishment order, and, on the other hand, a memory location (164B; 166B) for an emergency threshold serving for the triggering of an emergency replenishment order.

8. The installation as claimed in any one of claims 4 to 7, wherein the means (148) for evaluating the stock comprise means (150) for memorizing the status of the stock, which are linked to the transmission means (127) for transmitting a status of the stock to the replenishment center (129), this status comprising in particular the number and the type of full containers (107, 109) of the stock.

9. The installation as claimed in any one of claims 4 to 8, wherein the stock evaluation means (148) comprise means (154) for registering a removal or a placement of a container so as to detect whether a user is removing or returning a container.

10. The installation as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 9, wherein each reading device comprises two read heads (130, 131) disposed one behind the other in the direction (132) of passage of the containers (107, 109, 111) through this access (118), and wherein the means (154) for registering a removal or a placement of a container comprise, linked to the or to each reading device (13), means (156) [lacuna] a user is removing or returning a container.

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15. The installation as claimed in one of the preceding claims for containers initially devoid of any information medium, wherein it furthermore comprises a bay (200) for access to the storage zone (103...300), the bay comprising a station (205) for attaching and detaching information media (7) on a container.

15 17. The installation as claimed in one of the  
preceding claims, wherein the exploitation means (17)  
comprise means (57) for memorizing a list of  
geographical positions of sites to be replenished  
containerwise and means (59) for comparing the  
20 geographical position output during a container  
delivery.

19. The installation as claimed in claim 18,  
30 wherein the locating system comprises at least two  
zones (302, 304, 306, 308) for storing gas containers  
(3) situated on the site (300), and each comprising at  
least one access (310), each access (310) being  
furnished with at least one reading device (13)  
35 associated with said zone (302, 304, 306, 308), and  
wherein the means (314) for determining the positions  
of the containers (3) comprise means (316) for  
memorizing the identification codes of the containers  
(3), associated with a code for indentifying the zone

(302, 304, 306, 308) into which each container (3) has been introduced.

20. The installation as claimed in claim 19, wherein the means (314) for determining the positions of the containers furthermore comprise means (317) for memorizing the successive movements of the containers between the various storage or use zones (302, 304, 306, 308).

21. The installation as claimed in claim 19 or 20, wherein each access (310) furthermore comprises means (324) for identifying a user, which are linked to the means (314) for determining the positions of the containers, and wherein the means (314) for determining the positions of the containers furthermore comprise means (317) for memorizing the successive movements of containers associated with the identity of the user having performed these movements.

22. The installation as claimed in one of the preceding claims, wherein the information medium (7) comprises a bar-code tag (9), and wherein the reading device (13) comprises a bar-code reader (15).

23. The installation as claimed in one of claims 1 to 21, wherein the information medium (7) comprises an electronic tag (29) comprising means (39) for memorizing and means (33) of emission of said information, and where the reading device (13) comprises means (31) for communicating with the electronic tag (29), in particular over the airwaves, adapted so as to receive said information emitted by the emission means (33).

24. The installation as claimed in claim 23, wherein the functional unit (5) comprises means (51) for registering information relating to said task, and wherein it furthermore comprises at least one device (53) for writing information to the electronic tag (29), in particular a remote writing device, comprising means (31) for communicating with the electronic tag (29), in particular over the airwaves, and wherein the electronic tag (29) furthermore comprises means (35)

for receiving said registered information so as to  
memorize it in its memory means (39).

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